Racing: Vets, Beginners Mix It Up At Speedway

Continued from pg. 10

Hobby Stock starts are inverted, meaning the slower qualifying cars are put at the front of the starting line.

That's the worst part of the whole thing," Crow said. "The fast cars are in the back, so you go through the beater cars, the squirrely cars and the slower cars. But that's what people want to see, passing.

Crow said the Jalopies are also a hazard. "Only a couple Jalopies can beat Hobby Stocks," he said. "There's a few that smoke, they're sideways, they're beat to hell and you have to pass them without destroying your car."

Pittinato said it isn't just the beginners whose driving causes trouble on the track, sometimes it's the veterans.

"You get your guys who will flat out take you out instead of pass you," she said. "My car last year was a lot slower and they'd come up and they'd push the back of my car until it was too fast for my car to handle."

□

The majority of Hobby Stockers view the class as a training ground, a place to get experience and move up to Street Stocks or Sportsman.

Kelley, in his second year of racing, wants to race Street Stocks, where drivers are guaranteed $45 a race, and get $300 for a first place in a figure 8 main and $250 for winning an oval main.

"I just can't afford it any more," Kelley said. "I don't mean to sound big-headed, but you hear about guys doing the same thing, but getting $300."

The jump can be made. Dave Blankenship, Hobby Stock champion the past two years, is now racing Street Stock and is currently its points leader.

Money is the major factor in being able to move out of Hobby Stock. Street Stocks have no claims, so drivers spend up to $4000-$5000 on their engines.

"The best part (about racing Street Stocks) is, I basically I haven't spent a dime out of my own pocket," Blankenship said. "In fact, I'm still ahead about 500 bucks."

While the bigger purses help defray costs, the best way is to get sponsors who will help with the expenses. Most Hobby Stockers have only a few or even no sponsors. Krieger is one who has some and plans on making the jump to Street Stock next season. He says he got the sponsors by simple hard work.

"People say, 'Krieger has so many sponsors,' " Kreiger said. "Well, I'm not drinking beer at home like those guys are, I'm out working my (tail) off to get them."

□

Despite racing in Saugus' lowest division and their frustration over the costs involved, Hobby Stockers still enjoy the sport of auto racing as much as anybody.

Crow grew up in Canyon Country and has been going to Saugus Speedway since he was a toddler. "When I was growing up there was only McDonald's and Saugus Speedway on Soledad Cyn. (Rd.)," he said. "So you either went to McDonald's or the races. We went to Saugus Speedway."

Racing has been a bug Crow hasn't been able to shake. Kelley is the same way.

"Everybody is into their own thing," Kelley said. "I got friends who are into drugs. Me, I have my race car."